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(54) **Method for detecting polymorphism at nucleotide position -1639 of VKORC1 gene, and nucleic acid probe and kit therefor**

(57) A probe for detecting a polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene, the probe comprising an oligonucleotide having a nucleotide sequence having a length of 10 to 50 nucleotides, which nucleotide sequence comprises the nucleotides 80 to 89 of SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2 and has homology to SEQ NO:1 or 2 except

that the nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 in SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2 is cytosine, which nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 is labeled with a fluorescent dye.

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Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to a method for detecting a polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene, and a nucleic acid probe and a kit therefor.

[0002] As a drug for preventing coagulation of blood in a patient suffering from myocardial infarction or cerebral infarction, warfarin has been widely used. The optimal dose of warfarin largely varies among different human races, and, even in the same human race, individual differences are observed. High-dose administration of warfarin may cause epistaxis or subcutaneous hemorrhage, or, in some cases, side effects such as intracerebral hemorrhage. Therefore, it is very important to determine the optimal dose of warfarin for each patient when the treatment is carried out.

[0003] In terms of determination of such an optimal dose of warfarin, it has been recently reported that polymorphisms of the CYP2C9 gene and the VKORC1 gene influence the pharmacological effect of warfarin (Simone Rost et al., Nature Vol.427 2004 Letters to Nature and Mark J. Rieder et al., The New England Journal of Medicine 352; 22, 2005). The CYP2C9 gene is a gene that encodes cytochrome P450, which produces a warfarin metabolic enzyme. The VKORC1 gene is a gene that encodes a protein which acts on vitamin K, which is involved in coagulation of blood. Therefore, detection of polymorphisms of these two genes is very important for determining the optimal dose of warfarin depending on the patient, to reduce side effects. Known examples of the polymorphism of the VKORC1 gene include 1173C>T (rs9934438) and -1639 G>A (rs9923231). Such polymorphisms of the VKORC1 gene are described in TDM Research Vol. 25 No. 4 (2008) 141-144, Blood, 1 September 2007 Volume 110, Number 5, and Genet Med. 2008 Feb; 10(2): 89-98.

[0004] Examples of the method for detecting polymorphisms of a nucleotide include the PCR-RFLP method (TDM Research Vol. 25 No. 4 (2008) 141-144) and the method of detecting a mutation by pyrosequencing (Blood, 1 September 2007 Volume 110, Number 5).

However, the PCR-RFLP method in TDM Research Vol. 25 No. 4 (2008) 141-144 requires much labour and cost since, for example, the method needs extraction and purification of DNA and PCR, followed by restriction enzyme treatment of the amplified product and then electrophoresis. Further, since treatment of the amplified product is necessary after the PCR, there is a risk of contamination of the amplified product to the subsequent reaction system; automation is difficult; and testing of multiple nucleic acid sequences at the same time is impossible; which has been problematic.

The pyrosequencing in Blood, 1 September 2007 Volume 110, Number 5 is based on the principle that, by converting pyrophosphoric acid, which is released upon incorporation of a nucleotide into DNA, to ATP and using it for luminescent reaction, the amount of the nucleotide incorporated into the DNA can be quantified. Practically, by repeating a process in which one of each type of deoxyribonucleotide is added and the amount of luminescence is measured, followed by removing the deoxyribonucleotide, the sequence is determined. For removal of the excess nucleotide, there is the solid-phase method, in which the template DNA is bound to a certain solid-phase substrate and the reaction liquid is removed by washing, and the liquid-phase method, in which the nucleotide is degraded by addition of apyrase. Although a system for automatically carrying out such complicated operations is commercially available, they are very expensive and costly. Further, there are problems such as the requirement for extraction and purification of DNA and pretreatment, which requires much labour and cost.

[0005] On the other hand, there is a known method in which a region containing a mutation is amplified by PCR and melting curve analysis is then carried out using a nucleic acid probe labeled with a fluorescent dye, followed by analyzing the mutation based on the result of the melting curve analysis (JP 2001-286300 A and JP 2002-119291 A). However, the literature only teaches that the probe is designed such that, when a quenching probe labeled at its end with a fluorescent dye is hybridized to the target nucleic acid, multiple base pairs of the probe-nucleic acid hybrid form at least one GC pair at the end portion.

[0006] In W02008/117782, a method is described in which melting curve analysis is carried out using a probe whose 5'-end is fluorescently labeled, to detect VKORC1 1173C>T (rs9934438) and CYP2C9*3 at the same time. However, there is no description of a method to detect the polymorphism VKORC1-1639 G>A (rs9923231). Further, there is no description of a method to detect the polymorphism VKORC1-1639 G>A (rs9923231) and a polymorphism at the CYP2C9*3 mutation site at the same time.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The present invention aims to specify a quenching probe effective for detecting a polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene and to provide a method for detecting the polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene and a kit therefor.

[0008] The present inventors discovered that, by designing a quenching probe based on a particular region containing a polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene and carrying out melting curve analysis using the quenching probe, the mutation can be detected, thereby completing the present invention.

[0009] Thus, the present invention provides the following.

(1) A probe for detecting a polymorphism of the nucleotide at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene, said probe comprising an oligonucleotide having a nucleotide sequence having a length of 10 to 50 nucleotides, which nucleotide sequence comprises the nucleotides 80 to 89 of SEQ NO: 1 or 2 and has homology to SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2 except that the nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 in SEQ NO: 1 or 2 is cytosine, which nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 is labeled with a fluorescent dye.

(2) The probe according to (1), wherein said oligonucleotide has the nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 labeled with a fluorescent dye, at the first, second or third position from the 5'-end.

(3) The probe according to (1), said probe having the nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 labeled with a fluorescent dye, at the 5'-end.

(4) The probe according to any one of (1) to (3), wherein said oligonucleotide emits fluorescence when the oligonucleotide is not hybridized with a target sequence, and the fluorescence intensity decreases or increases when the oligonucleotide is hybridized with the target sequence.

(5) The probe according to (4), wherein said oligonucleotide emits fluorescence when the oligonucleotide is not hybridized with a target sequence, and the fluorescence intensity decreases when the oligonucleotide is hybridized with the target sequence.

(6) The probe according to any one of (1) to (5), wherein said oligonucleotide has a length of 10 to 40 nucleotides.

(7) The probe according to any one of (1) to (6), wherein said oligonucleotide has a length of 15 to 30 nucleotides.

(8) The probe according to any one of (1) to (7), wherein said oligonucleotide has a length of 15 to 25 nucleotides.

(9) The probe according to any one of (1) to (8), wherein said probe is a probe for melting curve analysis.

(10) The probe according to any one of (1) to (9), wherein said oligonucleotide consists of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.

(11) A method for detecting a polymorphism in the VKORC1 gene, which method comprises using the probe according to any one of (1) to (10).

(12) The method according to (11), said method comprising:

(I) bringing the probe according to any one of (1) to (10) into contact with a single-stranded nucleic acid in a sample, to allow hybridization of said fluorescently labeled oligonucleotide with said single-stranded nucleic acid;

(II) changing the temperature of the sample containing the hybrid to dissociate the hybrid, and measuring fluctuation of the fluorescence signal due to the dissociation of the hybrid;

(III) determining the T_m value, which is the dissociation temperature of the hybrid, based on the fluctuation of said signal; and

(IV) determining the presence of a polymorphism or the abundance ratios of nucleic acids having polymorphisms in the VKORC1 gene based on said T_m value.

(13) The method according to (12), said method further comprising amplification of nucleic acid before said Step (I) or at the same time as said Step (I).

(14) A method for judging (or determining) the optimal dose of warfarin (e.g. to prevent or treat coagulation), said method comprising detecting a polymorphism in the VKORC1 gene by the method according to any one of (11) to (13), and judging the optimal dose of warfarin based on the detected presence/absence of the polymorphism.

(15) A kit for detecting a polymorphism, said kit comprising the probe according to any one of (1) to (10).

(16) The kit according to (15), further comprising a primer(s) for amplification of a region in the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 1, said region comprising a sequence with which said oligonucleotide hybridizes.

(17) The kit according to (16), wherein said primers are the primers shown in SEQ ID NOs:3 and 4.

(18) The kit according to (16) or (17), further comprising the primers shown in SEQ ID NOs:8 and 9 and the probe shown in SEQ ID NO:10.

[0010] By adding the probe of the present invention to the gene amplification system in advance, typing of multiple gene variants is possible by just carrying out melting curve analysis (T_m analysis) after finishing the PCR reaction. Further, since direct testing of whole blood and oral mucosal suspensions is possible, the labour and the cost can be reduced.

The probe of the present invention has a high specificity and a high detection sensitivity.

[0011] By using the method of the present invention, even in cases where PCR is carried out, the amplification product does not need to be removed, so that there is hardly a risk of contamination. Further, since the method of the present invention has a simple mechanism, its automation can be easily attained.

[0012] By the method of the present invention, a polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene and a polymorphism at the CYP2C9*3 mutation site can be detected at the same time.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013]

Fig. 1 shows the changes in the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity of TAMRA (VKORC1 probe 1) per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t) in T_m analysis for the human genome 1 and the human genome 2 (purified genome) in Example 1. The ordinate indicates the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t), and the abscissa indicates the temperature (°C).

Fig. 2 shows the changes in the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity of TAMRA (VKORC1 probe 1) per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t) in T_m analysis for the human genome 1 and the human genome 2 (whole blood) in Example 2. The ordinate indicates the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t), and the abscissa indicates the temperature (°C).

Fig. 3 shows the changes in the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity of TAMRA (VKORC1 probe 2) per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t) in T_m analysis for the human genome 1 and the human genome 2 (purified genome) in the Comparative Example. The ordinate indicates the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t), and the abscissa indicates the temperature (°C).

Fig. 4 shows the changes in the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity of TAMRA (VKORC1 probe 1) per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t) in T_m analysis for the human genome 1 and the human genome 2 (purified genome) in Example 3. The ordinate indicates the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t), and the abscissa indicates the temperature (°C).

Fig. 5 shows the changes in the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity of BODIPY FL (CYP2C9*3 probe 1) per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t) in T_m analysis for the human genome 1 and the human genome 2 (purified genome) in Example 3. The ordinate indicates the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t), and the abscissa indicates the temperature (°C).

Fig. 6 shows the changes in the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity of TAMRA (VKORC1 probe 1) per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t) in T_m analysis for the human genome 1 and the human genome 2 (whole blood) in Example 4. The ordinate indicates the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t), and the abscissa indicates the temperature (°C).

Fig. 7 shows the changes in the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t) in T_m analysis for the human genome 1 and the human genome 2 (whole blood) in Example 4. The ordinate indicates the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity of BODIPY FL (CYP2C9*3 probe 1) per unit time (d the amount of increase in the fluorescence intensity/t), and the abscissa indicates the temperature (°C).

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

<1> Probe and Detection Method of the Present Invention

[0014] The probe of the present invention is a probe for detecting a polymorphism of the nucleotide at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene, the probe comprising an oligonucleotide having a nucleotide sequence having a length of 10 to 50 nucleotides, which nucleotide sequence comprises the nucleotides 80 to 89 of SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2 and has homology to SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2 except that the nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 of SEQ ID NO:1 or 2 is cytosine, which nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 is labeled with a fluorescent dye. Here, the nucleotide at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene is the nucleotide at position 88 in SEQ ID NO: or 2.

[0015] The probe of the present invention can be prepared in the same manner as the quenching probes described in JP 2001-286300 A and JP 2002-119291 A except that the probe of the present invention has the above-described specified sequence in the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:1 (sequence having the wild-type nucleotide at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene) or the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:2 (sequence having a variant (polymorphic) nucleotide at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene). The sequence of the present invention shown in SEQ ID NO: corresponds to positions 3501 to 3680 of GenBank Accession No. NG_011564. The length of the probe of the present invention is 10 to 50 nucleotides, preferably 10 to 40 nucleotides, more preferably 15 to 30 nucleotides, most preferably 15 to 25 nucleotides.

Examples of the nucleotide sequence of the probe used in the present invention include 5'-cattggccrggtgcggt-3' (SEQ ID NO:5). In the sequence, "r" represents a or g. The nucleotide sequence is more preferably 5'-cattggccaggtgcggt-3' (SEQ ID NO:6).

As the fluorescent dye, those described in JP 2001-286300 A and JP 2002-119291 A may be used, and particular examples thereof include Pacific Blue (trademark), FAM (trademark), TAMRA (trademark) and BODIPY (trademark) FL. The method of linking the fluorescent dye to the oligonucleotide may be carried out according to a conventional method, such as the one described in JP 2001-286300 A and JP 2002-119291 A.

[0016] The term "homology" herein means a nucleotide sequence having a sequence having a homology of not less than 80%, more preferably not less than 90%, most preferably 95% to a nucleotide sequence (or its complementary strand) in a particular nucleotide sequence. That is, the probe of the present invention has a sequence homologous to a nucleotide sequence having a length of 10 to 50 nucleotides containing the nucleotides 80 to 89 of SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2, but these sequences do not need to be completely identical, and only 5 nucleotides, 4 nucleotides, 3 nucleotides, 2 nucleotides or 1 nucleotide may be different therebetween. Alternatively expressed, the probe of the invention has a nucleotide sequence of 10 to 50 nucleotides which has at least 80, 90 or 95% homology (or identity) to a region of SEQ ID NO:1 or 2 which contains nucleotides 80 to 89 of SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2.

Fluorescence of the fluorescent dye of the probe of the present invention preferably decreases or increases when the probe is hybridized with a target sequence. The probe of the present invention is preferably a quenching probe, wherein fluorescence of the fluorescent dye is quenched upon hybridization.

Further, the probe of the present invention is preferably labeled at 5' or 3' with a fluorescent dye.

In the present specification, when the term "first, second or third position from the 5'-end" is mentioned, the 5'-end is counted as the first position, and, when the term "first, second or third position from the 3'-end" is mentioned, the 3'-end is counted as the first position.

[0017] As shown in Table 2 in the Examples of the present invention, by using the oligonucleotide of SEQ ID NO:6, a polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene can be detected.

[0018] The detection method of the present invention is a method wherein a nucleic acid having the polymorphic site at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene is subjected to melting curve analysis by using a nucleic acid probe labeled with a fluorescent dye and measuring fluorescence of the fluorescent dye, to detect the polymorphism based on the result of the melting curve analysis, which nucleic acid probe is the probe of the present invention.

[0019] The detection method of the present invention can be carried out according to conventional methods for nucleic acid amplification and melting curve analysis (T_m analysis) except that a region containing the polymorphic site at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene is amplified and that the probe of the present invention is used.

[0020] The detection method of the present invention preferably uses the probe of the present invention and comprises the following steps:

- (I) the step of adding the probe of the present invention to a sample containing DNA and allowing the probe to hybridize with the DNA;
- (II) the step of dissociating the hybrid between the probe and the target DNA by changing the temperature, and measuring fluctuation of the signal due to the dissociation of the hybrid;
- (III) the step of determining the T_m value by analyzing the fluctuation of the signal; and
- (IV) the step of determining the presence/absence of the polymorphism of interest or the abundance ratios of nucleotide sequences having polymorphisms.

[0021] The detection method of the present invention may be carried out according to conventional methods for nucleic acid amplification and melting curve analysis (T_m analysis) except that the probe of the present invention is used. Further, the detection method of the present invention may comprise amplification of nucleic acid before Step (I) or at the same time as Step (I).

[0022] The method of nucleic acid amplification is preferably a method using a polymerase, and examples thereof include PCR, ICAN and LAMP. In cases where the amplification is carried out by a method using a polymerase, the amplification is preferably carried out in the presence of the probe of the present invention. Those skilled in the art can easily adjust the reaction conditions and the like of the amplification depending on the probe used. Since, by this, the detection can be carried out just by analyzing the T_m value of the probe after the nucleic acid amplification, there is no need to handle the amplified product after the reaction. Therefore, the risk of contamination by the amplified product can be avoided. Further, since the detection can be carried out using the same instrument as the one necessary for the amplification, there is no need even to transfer the container. Thus, automation can be attained easily.

[0023] In the present invention, the DNA in the sample may be either a single-stranded DNA or a double-stranded DNA. In cases where the DNA is a double-stranded DNA, for example, a step of dissociating the double-stranded DNA in the sample by heating is preferably included before the hybridization step. By dissociating the double-stranded DNA into single-stranded DNAs, hybridization with the detection probe is possible in the subsequent hybridization step.

[0024] In the present invention, the ratio (molar ratio) of the probe of the present invention to be added with respect to DNA in the sample is not restricted, and the ratio is preferably not more than 1, more preferably not more than 0.3 with respect to DNA in the sample with a view to securing a sufficient detection signal. In this case, for example, the DNA in the sample may be either the total of the DNA comprising a polymorphism to be detected and DNA which does not comprise the polymorphism to be detected, or the total of the amplification product containing the sequence comprising a polymorphism to be detected and amplification products containing sequences which do not comprise the polymorphism to be detected. Although the ratio of the DNA to be detected in the DNA in the sample is usually not known, the ratio (molar ratio) of the probe to be added with respect to the DNA to be detected (the amplification product containing the sequence to be detected) is preferably not more than 100, more preferably not more than 50, still more preferably not more than 30 as a result. The lower limit of the ratio is not restricted, and the ratio is, for example, not less than 0.001, preferably not less than 0.01, more preferably not less than 0.2.

[0025] The ratio of the probe of the present invention to be added with respect to the DNA may be, for example, either a molar ratio with respect to the double-stranded DNA or a molar ratio with respect to the single-stranded DNA.

[0026] The T_m value will now be described. Heating a solution containing double-stranded DNA causes an increase in the absorbance at 260 nm. This is caused because the hydrogen bonds between the strands of the double-stranded DNA are unraveled by the heat and the double-stranded DNA is dissociated into single-stranded DNAs (melting of DNA). When all the double-stranded DNAs are dissociated into single-stranded DNAs, the absorbance becomes about 1.5 times as large as that observed when the heating was initiated (absorbance for only double-stranded DNA), and by this, completion of the melting can be judged. Based on this phenomenon, the melting temperature T_m is defined as the temperature at which the increase in absorbance reaches 50% of the total increase in absorbance.

[0027] In the present invention, measurement of the signal fluctuation due to the temperature change for determination of the T_m value can be carried out also by measuring the absorbance at 260 nm based on the above-mentioned principle, but the measurement is preferably carried out based on a signal from the label added to the probe of the present invention, which signal fluctuates depending on the state of hybrid formation between the DNA and the probe. Therefore, as the probe of the present invention, the above-mentioned labeled probe is preferably used. Examples of the labeled probe include a fluorescently labeled oligonucleotide probe wherein the probe emits fluorescence when it is not hybridized with the target sequence and the fluorescence intensity decreases (the fluorescence is quenched) when the probe is hybridized with the target sequence, and a fluorescently labeled oligonucleotide probe wherein the probe emits fluorescence when it is not hybridized with the target sequence and the fluorescence intensity increases when the probe is hybridized with the target sequence. In the case of the former probe, the probe shows no signal or a weak signal when it is forming a hybrid (double-stranded DNA) with the sequence to be detected, while the probe shows a signal or the signal increases when the probe is released by heating. In the case of the latter probe, the probe shows a signal by forming a hybrid (double-stranded DNA) with the sequence to be detected, while the signal decreases (disappears) when the probe is released by heating. Therefore, by detecting the change in the signal due to the label under conditions specific to the signal (absorbance and the like), the progress of melting and the determination of T_m value can be carried out similarly to the case of the measurement of absorbance at 260 nm. For example, the labeling substance in the labeled probe is as mentioned above, and the probe is preferably a fluorescent dye-labeled probe.

[0028] The nucleic acid to be used as the template for carrying out the nucleic acid amplification is not restricted as long as it contains a nucleic acid, and examples thereof include those derived from, or those which may be derived from, arbitrary biological origins such as blood; oral mucosal suspensions; somatic cells of nails, hairs and the like; germ cells; milks; ascitic fluids; paraffin-embedded tissues; gastric juices; fluids obtained by gastric lavage; peritoneal fluids; amniotic fluids; and cell cultures. The nucleic acid as the template may be used as it is directly after being obtained from the origin, or may be pretreated to modify the properties of the sample before being used.

[0029] The method of nucleic acid amplification is further described by way of an example using PCR. The primer pair used in the PCR may be designed in the same manner as in the method for designing a primer pair for conventional PCR, except that the primer pair is designed such that a region with which the probe of the present invention can hybridize is amplified. The length and the T_m value of each primer is usually 12 mer to 40 mer and 40 to 70°C, preferably 16 mer to 30 mer and 55 to 60°C. The lengths of the respective primers of the primer pair may be different, but the T_m values of the both primers are preferably almost the same (the difference is usually not more than 2°C). The T_m value is a value calculated by the Nearest Neighbour method. Examples of the primer pair include the one composed of the primers having the nucleotide sequences shown in SEQ ID NOs:3 and 4.

[0030] The PCR is preferably carried out in the presence of the probe of the present invention used in the present invention. By this, the T_m analysis can be carried out without handling the amplified product after the amplification reaction. Those skilled in the art can easily adjust the T_m values of the primers and the reaction conditions for the PCR depending on the probe used.

[0031] The following is a representative composition of the PCR reaction liquid.

[0032]

[Table 1]

DNA fragment	10 ¹ to 10 ⁸ molecules/reaction
Primer	200 to 1000 nM
Probe	100 to 1000 nM
Nucleotide	20 to 200 μ M each
DNA polymerase	0.01 to 0.03 U/ μ l
Tris-HCl (pH 8.4-9.0)	5 to 25 mM
MgCl ₂	1.5 to 3 mM
KCl	10 to 100 mM
Glycerol	0 to 20%

(Final liquid volume: 10 to 100 μ l)

[0033] The following is a representative temperature cycle, which is usually repeated 25 to 50 times.

- (1) Denaturation, at 90 to 98°C, for 1 to 60 seconds
- (2) Annealing, at 50 to 70°C, for 10 to 60 seconds
- (3) Extension, at 60 to 75°C, 10 to 180 seconds

[0034] In cases where the annealing and the extension are carried out as a single step, the conditions are 55 to 70°C for 10 to 180 seconds, for example.

[0035] The T_m analysis may be carried out in the same manner as in a conventional method except that fluorescence of the fluorescent dye of the probe of the present invention is measured. The measurement of fluorescence may be carried out by using excitation light having a wavelength which varies depending on the fluorescent dye and measuring light having an emission wavelength. The heating rate in the T_m analysis is usually 0.1 to 1°C/second. The composition of the reaction liquid used for carrying out the T_m analysis is not restricted as long as the probe can be hybridized with a nucleic acid having the complementary sequence of the nucleotide sequence of the probe, and usually, the concentration of monovalent cations is 1.5 to 5 mM, and the pH is 7 to 9. Since a reaction liquid for an amplification method using a DNA polymerase, such as PCR, usually satisfies these conditions, the reaction liquid after the amplification can be used as it is for the T_m analysis.

[0036] Detection of a polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene based on the result of the T_m analysis can be carried out according to a conventional method. The detection in the present invention includes detection of the presence/absence of a mutation.

Since detection of the presence/absence of a mutation is possible by the probe and the method of the present invention, judgment of the optimal dose of warfarin is also included in the present invention. More particularly, in cases where the nucleotide at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene is A, the sensitivity to warfarin is high, so that reduction of the required dose is suggested. Further, by the method of the present invention, it is also possible to detect a polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene and a polymorphism at the CYP2C9*3 mutation site at the same time. Also in cases where a mutation of CYP2C9*3 exists, the sensitivity to warfarin is high, so that reduction of the required dose is suggested. The gene sequence of CYP2C9*3, which is a polymorphism of CYP2C9, and the nucleotide sequence of a probe with which a polymorphism of the mutation site can be detected are described in, for example, WO2008/066163 and WO2008/117782. More particularly, the probe is a nucleic acid probe labeled at its 3'-end with a fluorescent dye whose fluorescence decreases upon hybridization, which nucleic acid probe has the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ NO: 28 or 29 in WO2008/066163 (SEQ NO:44 or 45 in WO2008/117782).

Examples of the probe of the present invention, with which the polymorphism of the VKORC1 gene and the polymorphism at the CYP2C9*3 mutation site can be detected at the same time (that is, detected in a single system) include the nucleic acid probes described in the above-described WO2008/066163 and WO2008/117782.

<2> Kit of Present Invention

[0037] The kit of the present invention is a kit to be used in the detection method of the present invention. This kit comprises a nucleic acid probe labeled with a fluorescent dye whose fluorescence changes upon hybridization (quenching probe, preferably), which nucleic acid probe comprises the above-described oligonucleotide. The kit of the present invention can also be used for judging the optimal dose of warfarin.

[0038] The probe is as described above for the probe of the present invention.

[0039] The detection kit of the present invention may further comprise, in addition to the probe, reagents necessary

for amplification of nucleic acid in the detection method of the present invention, especially a primer(s) for amplification using a DNA polymerase.

[0040] The probe, primer and other reagents may be contained separately, or a part of these may be contained as a mixture(s).

[0041] The present invention will now be described more concretely by way of the Examples below.

EXAMPLES

Example 1 (Single, Purified Genome)

[0042] Based on the nucleotide sequence including the polymorphic site at position - 1639 of the VKORC1 gene (SEQ NO:1 (wild type)), the primers shown in Table 2 were designed such that the polymorphic site can be amplified. In Table 2, the positions of the F primer and the R primer are represented as the positions in the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ NO: 1. The position of the probe 1 is represented as the position in the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:2. Thereafter, the probe shown in Table 2, which has C at an end, was designed. In Table 2, the position of the probe 1 is represented as the position in the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:2. P at the 3'-end indicates that the 3'-end is phosphorylated. Labeling with TAMRA was carried out according to a conventional method.

[0043]

[Table 2]

Name	Sequence	Position	SEQ ID NO:	mer	T _m (°C)
VKORC1 F primer	5'-ggaagtcaagcaagagaagacctg-3'	47-70	3	24	57.58
VKORC1 R primer	5'-aatgctaggattataggcgtgag-3'	121-99	4	23	55.36
VKORC1 probe 1	5'-(TAMRA)-cattggccAggtgcggt-P-3'	80-96	6	17	53.01

[0044] The melting temperature (T_m) was calculated according to the Nearest Neighbour method in http://www.m-neko.net/tm_calc/, with the settings of: primer conc., 250 nM; Na⁺ conc., 50 mM.

[0045] Using as a sample the human genome (human genome 1 or 2 in Table 4) purified from whole blood (100 copies/reaction liquid), PCR and T_m analysis were carried out using a fully automatic SNPs testing device (trade name: i-densy (trademark), manufactured by ARKRAY, Inc.). The conditions for the PCR and the T_m analysis were as shown in Table 5, and the composition of the PCR reaction liquid was as shown in Table 3.

The emission wavelength and the detection wavelength in the T_m analysis were 520 to 555 nm and 585 to 700 nm (TAMRA), respectively.

[0046]

[Table 3]

In 50 μ L of the PCR reaction liquid:

- 1 x reaction buffer
- 1.25 U Taq polymerase
- 1.5 mmol/L MgCl₂
- 0.2 mmol/L dNTP
- 0.5 μ mol/L VKORC1 F primer (Table 2)
- 1 μ mol/L VKORC1 R primer (Table 2)
- 0.2 μ mol/L VKORC1 probe 1 (Table 2)

[0047]

[Table 4]

	VKORC1-1639	CYP2C9*3
Human genome 1	Ht(G/A)	Wt(A/A)
Human genome 2	Mt(A/A)	Ht(A/C)

Here, Ht represents a heterozygote, Wt represents the wild type, and Mt represents a variant.

[0048]

[Table 5]

Conditions for PCR and T_m analysis

95°C, 60sec

↓

(95°C, 1 sec.; 60°C, 15 sec.)x50

↓

95°C, 1 sec.

↓

40°C, 60 sec.

↓

T_m (40°C→75°C, 1°C/3 sec.)

[0049] As a result of the PCR and the T_m analysis using the probe shown in table 2, in terms of the human genome 1, peaks for TAMRA were observed at about 56°C and about 64°C, and, in terms of the human genome 2, a peak for TAMRA was observed at about 64°C (Fig. 1).

Example 2 (Single, Whole Blood)

[0050] The reaction was carried out in the same manner as in Example 1 except that whole blood was used as the sample.

[0051] As a result of the PCR and the T_m analysis using the probe shown in Table 2, in terms of the human genome 1, peaks for TAMRA were observed at about 56°C and about 64°C, and, in terms of the human genome 2, a peak for TAMRA was observed at about 64°C (Fig. 2), similarly to the results in Example 1.

Comparative Example

[0052] The reaction was carried out in the same manner as in Example 1 except that the PCR reaction liquid having the composition shown in Table 6 was used.

[0053]

[Table 6]

In 50 µL of the PCR reaction liquid:

1 x reaction buffer

1.25 U Taq polymerase

1.5 mmol/L MgCl₂

0.2 mmol/L dNTP

1 µmol/L VKORC1 F primer (Table 2)

0.5 µmol/L VKORC1 R primer (Table 2)

0.2 µmol/L VKORC1 probe 2 (Table 7)

[0054]

[Table 7]

Name	Sequence	Position	SEQ ID NO:	mer	T _m (°C)
VKORC1 probe 2	5'-(TAMRA)-caccTggccaatgggtt-P-3'	92-77	7	16	46.26
*The position of the probe 2 is represented as positions in the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:2.					

[0055] As a result of the PCR and the T_m analysis using the probe shown in table 7, only a single peak for TAMRA was observed at about 59°C in the both human genomes 1 and 2, and therefore it was impossible to distinguish between the heterozygote and the homozygote (Fig. 3). Thus, it is understood that the sequence of the probe cannot be arbitrary

even in cases where C at the 5'- or 3'-end of the probe is fluorescently labeled, and that fluorescent labeling of C at position 80, similarly to the case of the probe shown in SEQ ID NO:6, is important.

[0056] From the results of Examples 1 and 2 and Comparative Example, change in the fluorescence intensity was found when the probe of SEQ ID NO:6 was used for detecting the polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene, which change could be analyzed by the T_m analysis. That is, in terms of this mutation, the human genome 1, which is heterozygotic, showed two peaks at about 56°C and about 64°C, while the human genome 2, which is a variant, showed only a single peak at about 64°C, suggesting that a unique change in the pattern of the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity exists. Further, from these results, it can be seen that the reaction using the wild-type human genome for detection of this mutation results in a single peak at about 56°C.

Therefore, by using the probe of SEQ ID NO:6, the polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene can be detected.

Example 3 (Multiple, Purified Genome)

[0057] The reaction was carried out in the same manner as in Example 1 except that a PCR reaction liquid having the composition shown in Table 8 was used.

The emission wavelength and the detection wavelength in the T_m analysis were 420 to 485 nm and 520 to 555 nm (BODIPY FL), respectively, or 520 to 555 nm and 585 to 700 nm (TAMRA), respectively.

[0058]

[Table 8]

In 50 μ L of the PCR reaction liquid:

- 1 x reaction buffer
- 1.25 U Taq polymerase
- 1.5 mmol/L $MgCl_2$
- 0.2 mmol/L dNTP
- 14% (v/v) Glycerol
- 0.5 μ mol/L VKORC1 F primer (Table 2)
- 1 μ mol/L VKORC1 R primer (Table 2)
- 0.4 μ mol/L VKORC1 probe 1 (Table 2)
- 2 μ mol/L CYP2C9*3 F primer (Table 9)
- 1 μ mol/L CYP2C9*3 R primer (Table 9)
- 0.2 μ mol/L CYP2C9*3 probe 1 (Table 9)

[0059]

[Table 9]

As the CYP2C9*3 primers and probe, the followings were used.

Name	Sequence	SEQ ID NO:	mer	T_m (°C)
CYP2C9*3 F primer	5'-cggagccccctgcatgcaa-3'	8	18	57.04
CYP2C9*3 R primer	5'-aatgatactatgaattggggacttcgaa-3'	9	29	57.23
CYP2C9*3 probe 1	5'-ggagaagggtcaaGgtatc-(BODIPY FL)-3'	10	17	45.44

[0060] The above CYP2C9*3 probe 1 has the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:29 in WO2008/066163 and SEQ ID NO:45 in WO2008/117782.

[0061] As a result of evaluation by fluorescence of TAMRA, in terms of the human genome 1, peaks for TAMRA were observed at about 52°C and about 60°C, and, in terms of the human genome 2, a peak for TAMRA was observed at about 60°C (Fig. 4). Further, as a result of evaluation by fluorescence of BODIPY FL, in terms of the human genome 1, a peak for BODIPY FL was observed at about 49°C, and, in terms of the human genome 2, peaks for BODIPY FL were observed at about 49°C and about 56°C (Fig. 5).

Example 4 (Multiple, Whole Blood)

[0062] The reaction was carried out in the same manner as in Example 3 except that whole blood was used as a sample. The whole blood was subjected to pretreatment as follows before use.

To 70 μ l of the dilution liquid (1) described below, 10 μ l of whole blood was added, and the resulting mixture was mixed well, followed by adding 10 μ l of this mixture to 70 μ l of the dilution liquid (2) described below. At 95°C, 17 μ l of this mixture was heated for 10 minutes, to obtain 4 μ l of pretreated whole blood, which was then used as a sample.

5 Dilution liquid (1)

[0063]

10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0)
 10 0.1 mM EDTA (pH 8.0)
 0.3% (v/v) SDS

Dilution liquid (2)

15 **[0064]**

10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0)
 0.1 mM EDTA (pH 8.0)

20 **[0065]** As a result of evaluation by fluorescence of TAMRA, in terms of the human genome 1, peaks for TAMRA were observed at about 51°C and about 60°C, and, in terms of the human genome 2, a peak for TAMRA was observed at about 60°C (Fig. 6), similarly to the results in Example 3. Further, as a result of evaluation by fluorescence of BODIPY FL, in terms of the human genome 1, a peak for BODIPY FL was observed at about 49°C, and, in terms of the human genome 2, peaks for BODIPY FL were observed at about 49°C and about 56°C (Fig. 7).

25 **[0066]** From the results of Examples 3 and 4, a change in the fluorescence intensity was found when the probe of SEQ ID NO:6 was used for detecting the polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene, which change could be analyzed by the T_m analysis. That is, in terms of this mutation, the human genome 1, which is heterozygotic, showed two peaks at about 52°C and about 60°C, while the human genome 2, which is a variant, showed only a single peak at about 60°C, suggesting that a unique change in the pattern of the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity exists.
 30 Further, from these results, it can be seen that the reaction using the wild-type human genome for detection of this mutation results in a single peak at about 52°C.

Further, also in terms of the polymorphism at the CYP2C9*3 mutation site, change in the fluorescence intensity which can be analyzed by the T_m analysis was found. That is, in terms of this mutation, the human genome 1, which is the wild type, showed only a single peak at about 49°C, while the human genome 2, which is heterozygotic, showed the
 35 two peaks at about 49°C and about 56°C, suggesting that a unique change in the pattern of the amount of change in the fluorescence intensity exists. Further, from these results, it can be seen that the reaction using the variant-type human genome for detection of this mutation results in a single peak at about 56°C.

Thus, by using the probes shown in SEQ ID NOs:6 and 10 at the same time, the polymorphism at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene and the polymorphism at the CYP2C9*3 mutation site can be detected at the same time.
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SEQUENCE LISTING

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Claims

1. A probe for detecting a polymorphism of the nucleotide at position -1639 of the VKORC1 gene, said probe comprising an oligonucleotide having a nucleotide sequence having a length of 10 to 50 nucleotides, which nucleotide sequence comprises the nucleotides 80 to 89 of SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2 and has homology to SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2, preferably not less than 80% homology, except that the nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 in SEQ ID NO: 1 or 2 is cytosine, which nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 is labeled with a fluorescent dye.
2. The probe according to claim 1, wherein said oligonucleotide has the nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 labeled with a fluorescent dye, at the first, second or third position from the 5'-end.
3. The probe according to claim 1, said probe having the nucleotide corresponding to the nucleotide at position 80 labeled with a fluorescent dye, at the 5'-end.
4. The probe according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein said oligonucleotide emits fluorescence when the oligonucleotide is not hybridized with a target sequence, and the fluorescence intensity decreases or increases when the oligonucleotide is hybridized with the target sequence.
5. The probe according to claim 4, wherein said oligonucleotide emits fluorescence when the oligonucleotide is not hybridized with a target sequence, and the fluorescence intensity decreases when the oligonucleotide is hybridized with the target sequence.
6. The probe according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein said oligonucleotide has a length of 10 to 40 nucleotides, preferably a length of 15 to 30 nucleotides, preferably a length of 15 to 25 nucleotides.
7. The probe according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein said probe is a probe for melting curve analysis.
8. The probe according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein said oligonucleotide consists of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:6.
9. A method for detecting a polymorphism in the VKORC1 gene, which method comprises using the probe according to any one of claims 1 to 8.
10. The method according to claim 9, said method comprising:
 - (I) bringing the probe according to any one of claims 1 to 8 into contact with a single-stranded nucleic acid in a sample, to allow hybridization of said fluorescently labeled oligonucleotide with said single-stranded nucleic acid;
 - (II) changing the temperature of the sample containing the hybrid to dissociate the hybrid, and measuring fluctuation of the fluorescence signal due to the dissociation of the hybrid;
 - (III) determining the T_m value, which is the dissociation temperature of the hybrid, based on the fluctuation of said signal; and
 - (IV) determining the presence of a polymorphism or the abundance ratios of nucleic acids having polymorphisms in the VKORC1 gene based on said T_m value.
11. The method according to claim 10, said method further comprising amplification of nucleic acid before said Step (I) or at the same time as said Step (I).
12. A method for judging the optimal dose of warfarin, said method comprising detecting a polymorphism in the VKORC1 gene by the method according to any one of claims 9 to 11, and judging the optimal dose of warfarin based on the

detected presence/absence of the polymorphism.

13. A kit for detecting a polymorphism, said kit comprising the probe according to any one of claims 1 to 8.

5 14. The kit according to claim 13, further comprising a primer(s) for amplification of a region in the nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID NO:1, said region comprising a sequence with which said oligonucleotide hybridizes, wherein preferably said primers are the primers shown in SEQ ID NOs:3 and 4.

10 15. The kit according to claim 14, further comprising the primers shown in SEQ ID NOs:8 and 9 and the probe shown in SEQ ID NO:10.

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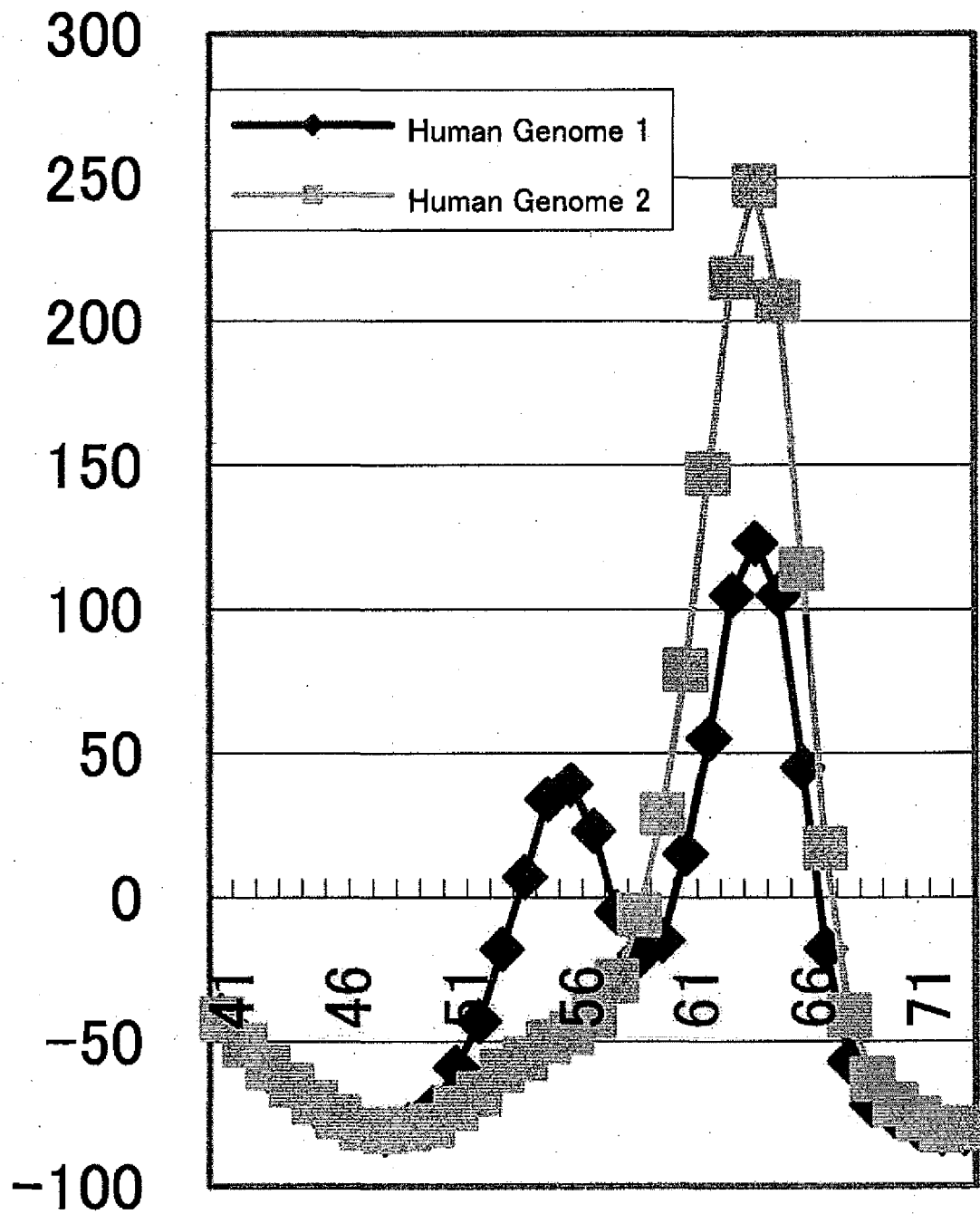
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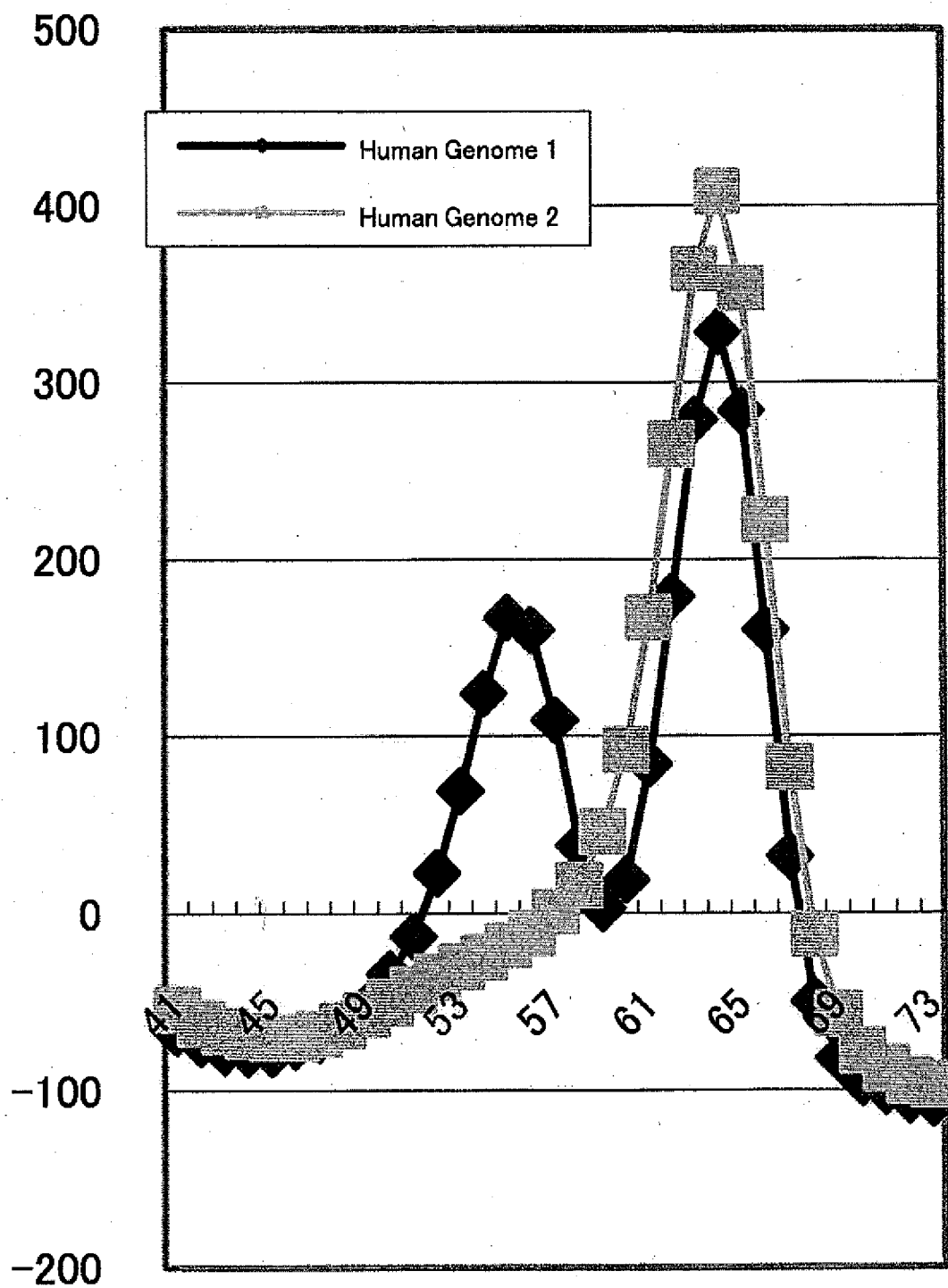
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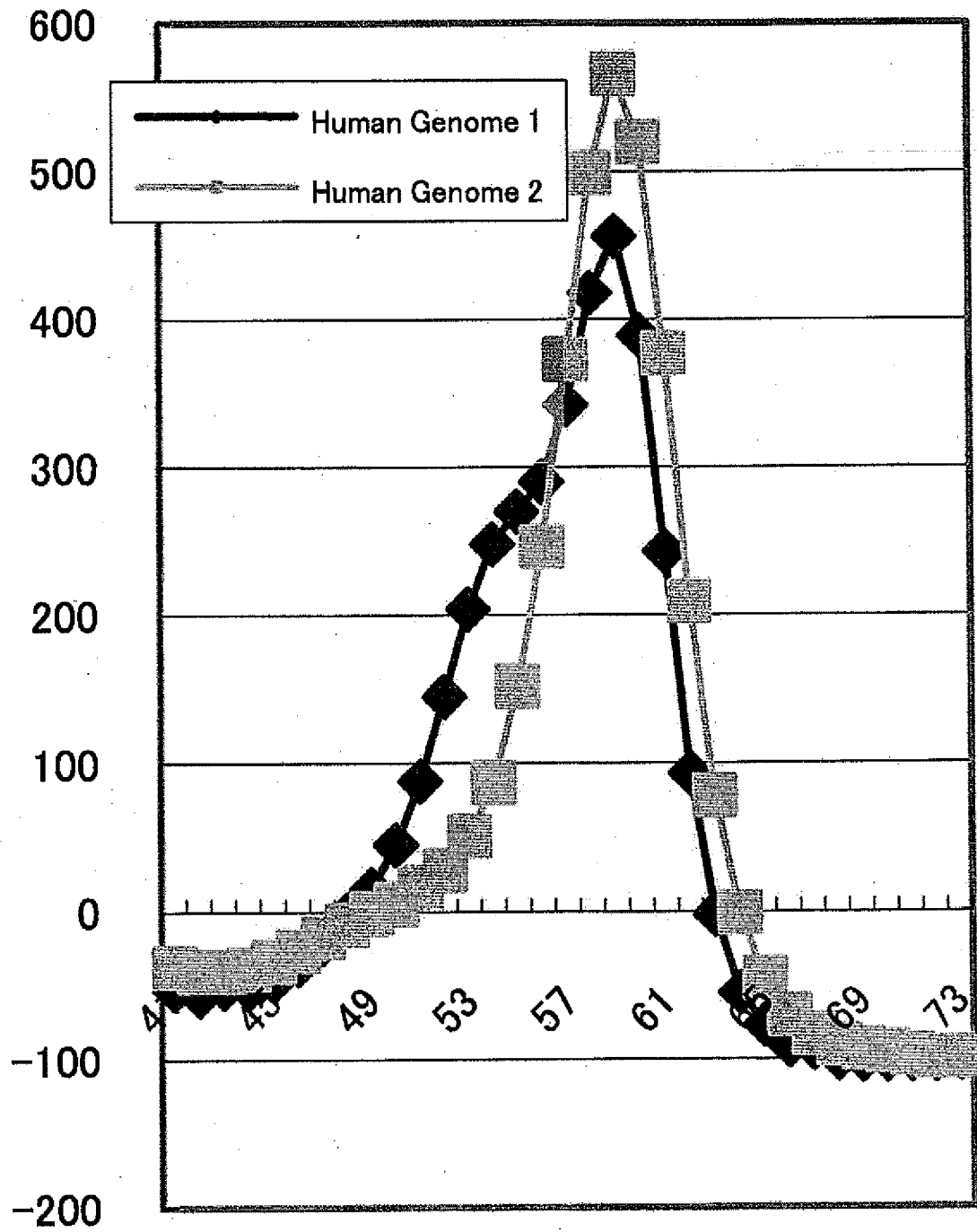
[Fig. 1]



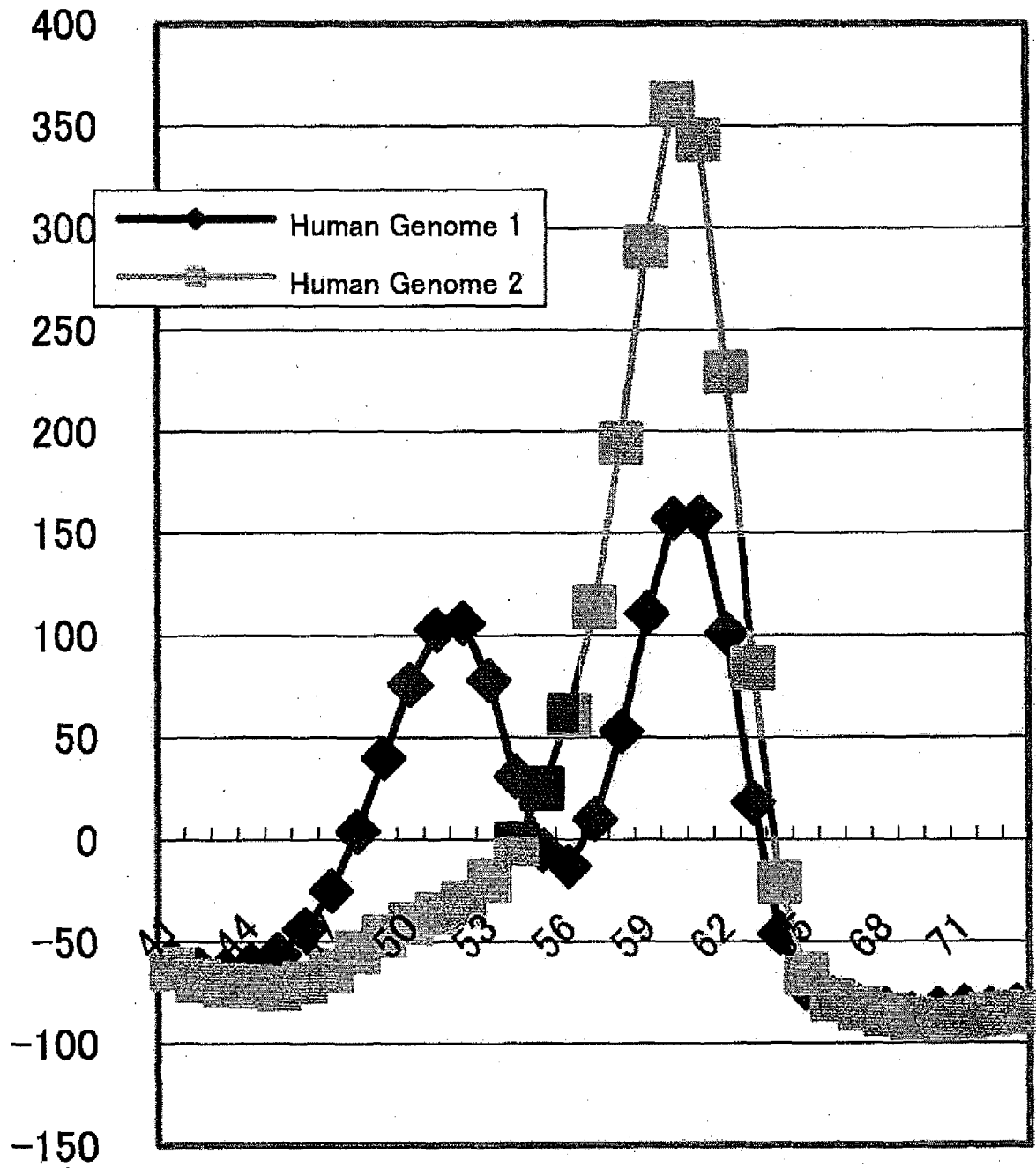
[Fig. 2]



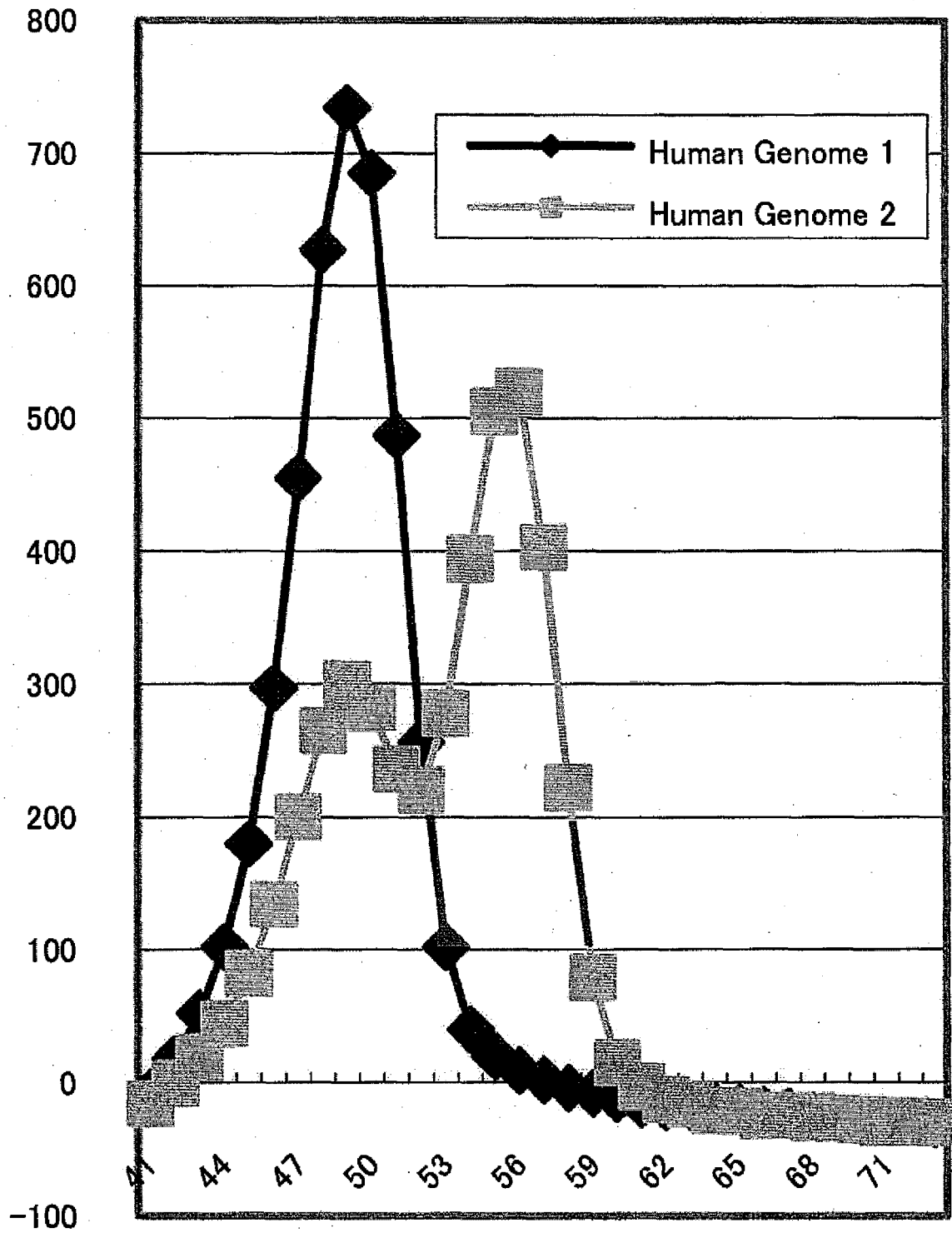
[Fig. 3]



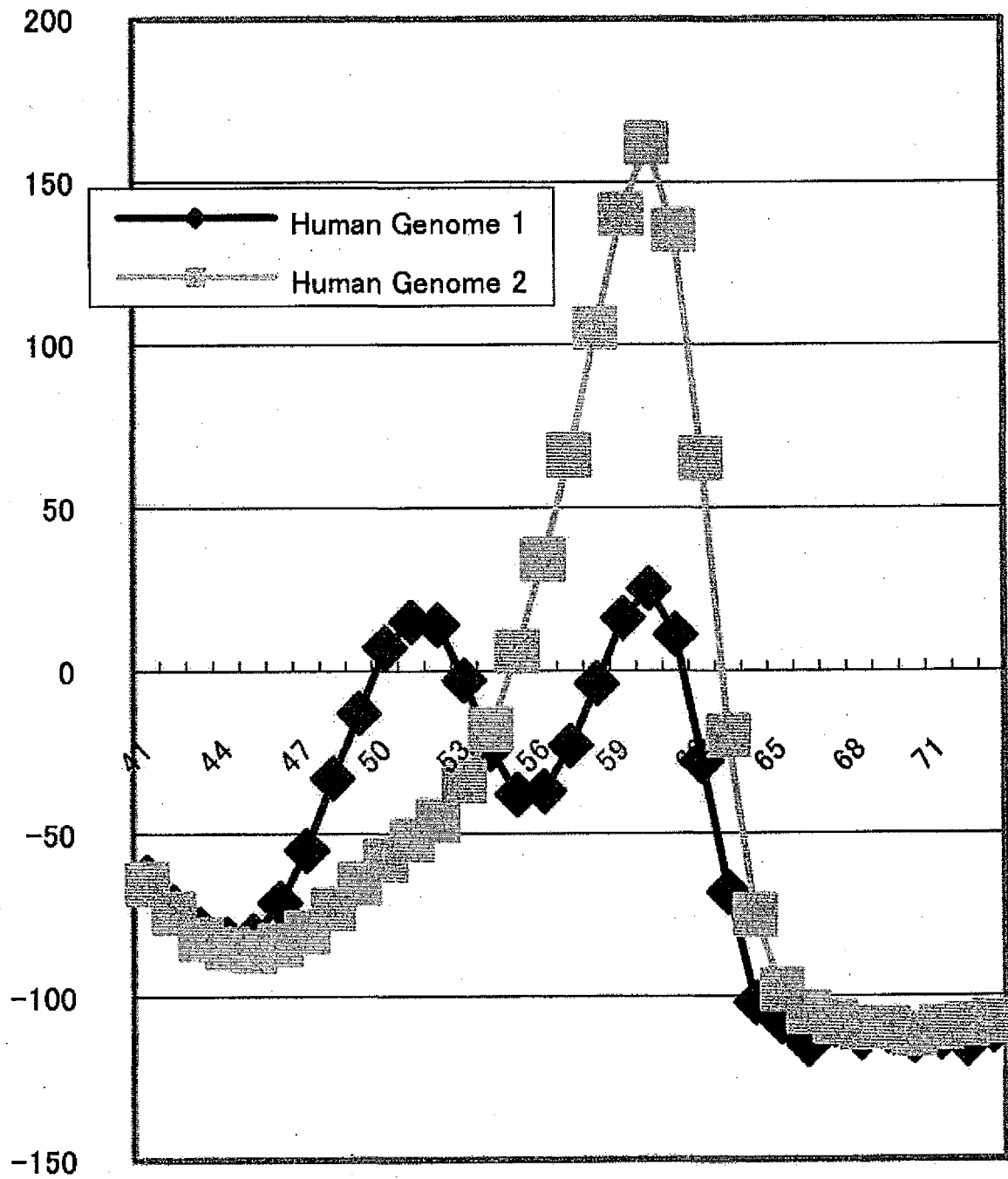
[Fig. 4]



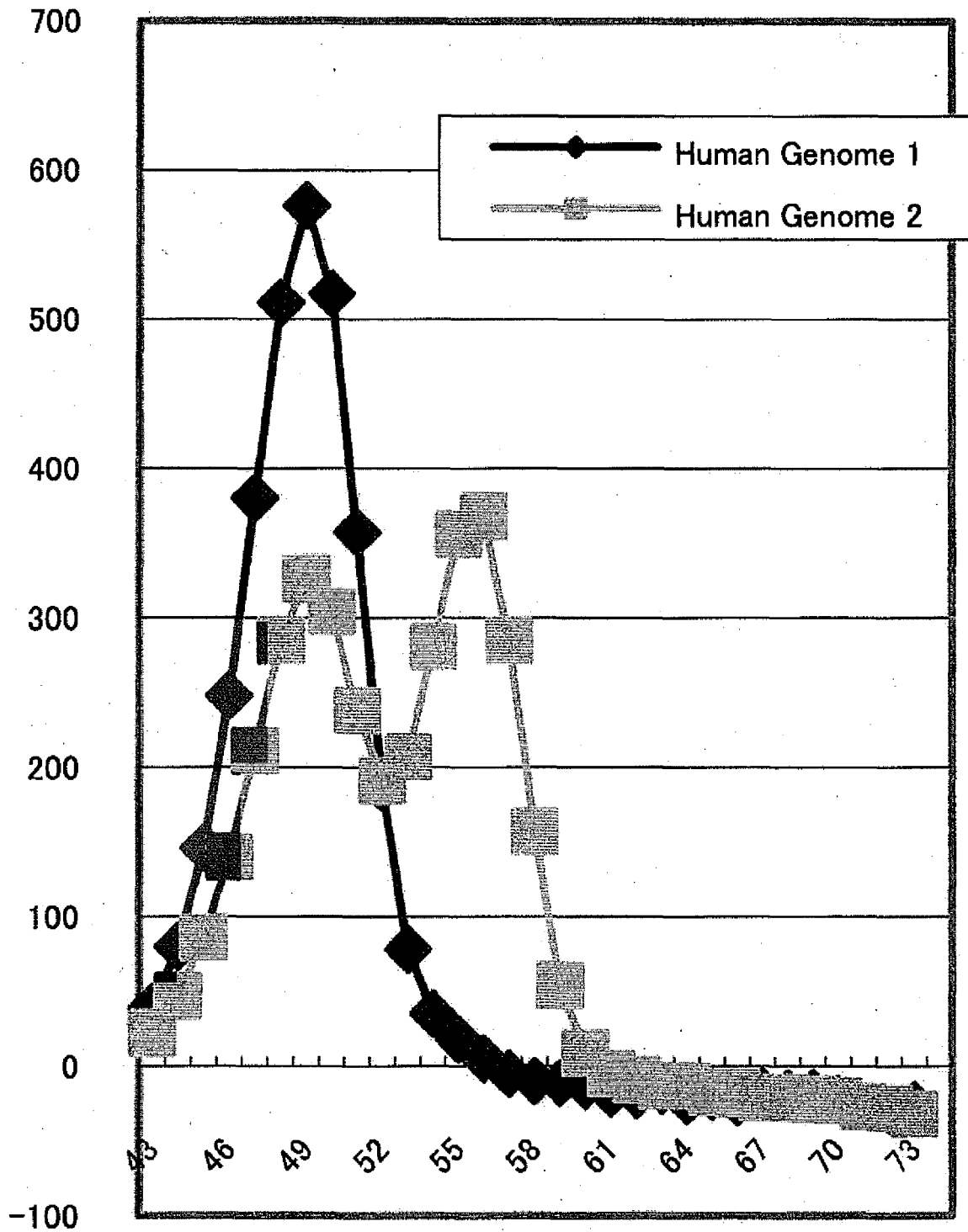
[Fig. 5]



[Fig. 6]



[Fig. 7]





EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 11 16 8544

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Y	EP 2 128 273 A1 (ARKRAY INC [JP]) 2 December 2009 (2009-12-02) * the whole document * * page 4, paragraph 0012 - paragraph 0013; claim 15; figures 1-6 * * page 11, paragraph 0059 - page 16, paragraph 0097; examples 1-5 *	1-15	
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 24 October 2011	Examiner Schmitt, Anja
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 11 16 8544

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
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Y	JP 2009 219445 A (FUJIFILM CORP) 1 October 2009 (2009-10-01) * page 9; sequences 3,13 * * the whole document *	1-15	
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 24 October 2011	Examiner Schmitt, Anja
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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